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Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-third session
9 June to 3 July 2003
Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-third session

Rapporteur: Mr. Jerry **Kramer** (Canada)

Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

(Item 4 (a))

Section 19
Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

1. At its 16th meeting, on 20 June 2003, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 19, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/58/6 (Sect. 19)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced section 19 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. The importance of the programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as well as its being a well-run regional commission, was recognized. Continued support for the role of ESCAP in the Asian and Pacific region was reiterated. The view was expressed that ESCAP should facilitate strategic policy and collaboration among member States in the region. The view was also expressed that there is room for revitalizing and reorienting activities in the programme of work.

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4. Regular review of common priority areas was recommended. The necessity of maintaining activities in the entire region was expressed. It was noted with concern that some countries in the region were excluded from activities undertaken by ESCAP.

5. It was noted with satisfaction that ESCAP is pursuing social and economic development through the three themes, namely, poverty reduction, managing globalization and addressing emerging social issues, and through the seven cross-cutting subprogrammes which will address major problems in the region.

6. It was noted with appreciation that ESCAP had reoriented its work programme and resources to support implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of global conferences. Further, ESCAP was commended for its comprehensive review of outputs and, in this regard, its proposed 57 outputs for deletion, mainly relating to publications. It was noted, however, that more could be done to further rationalize resources.

7. Concern was expressed at the perceived lack of coordination between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with the regional commissions and duplication of activities.

8. It was noted with appreciation that gender dimension had been successfully mainstreamed by ESCAP into five of its seven subprogrammes.

9. The consultative process for the preparation of the proposed programme budget was appreciated.

10. It was also noted that the proposed programme budget was well prepared and clearly reflected the key international conferences, the Doha Development Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. Exploration of the follow-up to the Monterrey Conference in the ESCAP region was recommended. The view was expressed that the programme of work was aligned with the Millennium Development Goals, which had not been endorsed by the General Assembly, and that only the Millennium Declaration had been endorsed.

11. It was suggested that ESCAP should focus on assisting Member States to implement the follow-up to global conferences and the Millennium Declaration Goals. Support for technical cooperation and advisory services to achieve the relevant Millennium Development Goals was expressed. Clarification on the use of resources under section 23, Technical cooperation, was requested.

12. The view was expressed that, to avoid duplication and to identify common practices, a proper division of labour was required between DESA and the regional commissions, as well as among the regional commissions. Statistics was pointed out as an area of possible overlap.

13. The view was expressed that the expected accomplishments in the fascicle were directly related and consistent with the medium-term plan. Satisfaction with the expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures in all seven subprogrammes was expressed. Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement were measurable. Concern was expressed that some expected accomplishments in the medium-term plan were not included in the proposed programme budget. It was also noted that a few performance

measurements did not include baseline data. The absence of performance measurements under Executive direction and management was also noted in the budget fascicles of ESCAP and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

14. The discontinuation of 57 outputs and the streamlining of publications were appreciated. More rigorous review of outputs was recommended. Clarification was requested on the criteria for the deletion of outputs. Concern was expressed that the reduction in outputs affected work relating to agriculture, which plays a primary role in the region. The view was also expressed that end user surveys of publications should be made in all the regional commissions.

15. It was suggested that, in future, ESCAP should participate in Committee for Programme and Coordination meetings by videoconference.

Conclusions and recommendations

16. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 19, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific for the biennium 2004-2005, subject to the following modifications:**

Subprogramme 7

Replace the title with "Social development, including persistent and emerging issues".

Paragraph 19.7

In the second and third lines replace the words "least developed and landlocked countries as well as other developing countries" with the words the developing countries and countries with economies in transition, particularly the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States".

Paragraph 19.40 (c) (ii)

In the second and third lines and in the last two lines replace the words "in the least developed countries and the countries with economies in transition" with the words "especially in the developing countries and countries with economies in transition, particularly in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States".

Paragraph 19.48 (c) (ii), (iii), (iv)

Add the words ", advanced fossil fuel technology" after the words "energy efficiency".

Table 19.22

(a) **Under expected accomplishment (a), replace the words "social issues" with the words "social development issues".**

(b) **Delete indicator of achievement (a) (i).**

17. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Recognize that there exists a mandate for assisting national capacities and no mandate for either reporting or monitoring on the indicators of the goals of the Millennium Declaration at the regional level;**

(b) **Urge that the new subprogramme on environment and sustainable development function in conformity with decisions taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session;**

(c) **Welcome the emphasis on combating the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Asian and Pacific region and urge coordination with similar activities in the United Nations system;**

(d) **Suggest that ESCAP, in future, include proposed programme budget figures in addition to the proposed programme narratives at discussions at the intergovernmental level in ESCAP;**

(e) **Urge closer coordination of programmes and activities with other organizations of the United Nations system and the Secretariat so as to avoid duplication of effort;**

(f) **Urge that under indicators of achievement, ESCAP enumerate cases where it developed specific projects and programmes for implementation in the various areas of work, rather than listing how many countries' policies have been positively affected by ESCAP activities, given the absence of any obvious correlation between the two.**